

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 IO-12 AID-20 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01

RSR-01 /155 W

----- 104331

R 041112 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9014

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

CONFIDENTIAL LAGOS 2707

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IV, NI

SUBJECT: ARIKPO VISIT TO IVORY COAST

REFS : ABIDJAN 1981, 2043

BEGIN SUMMARY: MEA ACCOUNT OF ARIKPO VISIT TO IVORY COAST
LARGELY COINCIDES WITH PICTURE PAINTED BY REFTELS, BUT SHOWS
STRONG UNDERTONE OF RESIDUAL SUSPICION WHICH VISIT CLEARLY
FAILED DISPEL. END SUMMARY.

1. MEA DIRECTOR AFRICA DEPT. MUSA, WHO ACCOMPANIED
COMMISSIONER EXTAFF ARIKPO ON IVORY COAST VISIT MARCH 19-22,
GAVE US ACCOUNT OF TRIP APRIL 3 WHICH LARGELY COINCIDES WITH
PICUTRE PAINTED REFTELS. HE CONFIRMED WARMTH OF GOIC
RECEPTION, CORDIAL ATMOSPHERE WHICH PREVADED TALKS , AND
SATISFACTION THAT VISIT MARCKED SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS
TOWARD CLOSER BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP.

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2. IT WAS CLEAR IN DISCUSSION WITH MUSA, HOWEVER, THE NIGERIANS NOT CONVINCED THEY WILL SOON SEE EYE TO EYE WITH GOIC ON ISSUES WHICH TOP FMG PRIORITY LIST-- WEST AFRICAN ECONOMIC INTERGRATION AND PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. DESPITE SOOTHING WORDS OF COMMUNIQUE, SUSPICION PERSISTS THAT GOIC TOO CLOSELY TIED TO FRANCE TO ADOPT SUFFICIENTLY INDEPENDENT STANCE TO BRING ITS POLICIES INTO LINE WITH THOSE OF FMG. IVORIANS TOLD THEIR NIGERIAN VISITORS THAT THEY ARE GRADUALLY DISENTANGLING FROM FRANCE, BUT MUSA OBSERVED TO EMBOFF THAT FRENCH GRIP ON ECONOMY STILL SEEMS TO STRONG FOR GOIC TO TAKE ANY ACTIONS WHICH WHICH MIGHT DISPLEASE GOF.

3. WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO WEST AFRICAN ECONOMIC INTEGRATION, MUSA VOICED SUSPICION THAT FRATERNITE- MATIN HEADLINES REPORTING ARIKPO SUPPORT FOR " CEOA" WERE DELIBERATE GOIC EFFORT TO TWIST COMMISSIONER' S WORDS. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT CEOA IS LITERAL TRANSLATION OF WAEC TO WHICH ARIKPO REFERRED, BUT STILL REMAINED UNCONVINCED THAT PRESS REPORTS HAD BEEN MADE IN GOOD FAITH. DELETION OF REFERENCE TO CUTTING ACROSS LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL BARRIERS FROM IVORIAN VERSION OF COMMUNIQUE (ABIDJAN 2043) LIKELY REINFORCE MUSA' S SUSPICIONS ON THIS POINT.

4. SIMILAR DISTRUST SURFACED IN DISCUSSION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA . MUSA SAID IVORIANS TRIED HARD TO EXPLAIN THAT THEIR INITIAL ADVOCACY OF " DIALOGUE" HAD NOT BEEN INTENDED TO DISCOUNT VALUE OF LIBERATION STUGGLE. DIALOGUE, DOIC OFFICIALS TOLD ARIKPO, HAD BEEN ADVANCED AS ONE OF SEVERAL COURSES WHICH AFRICAN STATES SHOULD PURSUE IN THEIR EFFORT TO ACHIEVE LIBERATION AND MAJORITY RULE, BUT WAS NOT ENVISAGED AS EXCLUSIVE APPROACH. IVORIANS CITED ALGERIAN PRE- CEDENT, WHERE SECRET NEGOTIATIONS HAD TAKEN PLACE IN PARALLEL WITH ARMED STRUGGLE, AND ALLEGED THAT GOIC DIALOGUE PROPOSAL WAS PUT FORWARD IN SAME SENSE. MUSA COMMENTED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS SEEMED TO NIGERIANS NOTHING MORE THAN ATTEMPT BY GOIC TO RECOVER AFTER FINDING THEMSELVES BADLY ISOLATED BY INITIAL DIALOGUE PROPOSAL, AND HE IMPLIED THAT ARIKPO WAS UNIMPRESSED BY IVORIAN ARGUMENTATION ON THIS POINT.

5. COMMENT: WHILE MISUNDERSTANDING AND BITTERNESS STEMMING FROM BIAFRAN EXPERIENCE ARE LARGELY DISPELLED, FUNDAMENTAL CONFIDENTIAL

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